



### **Josh Waddell – Impact America – Tennessee**

My name is Josh Waddell and I am an AmeriCorps member with Impact America – Tennessee. One of the reasons I have enjoyed my experience serving as an AmeriCorps member is because my program offers a variety of activities that have both allowed me to utilize my strengths and challenge me in areas where I had no prior experience. The three primary initiatives I have participated in this year are FocusFirst, SaveFirst, and Stories from the Line. My year of service began in August with FocusFirst, a free vision care initiative that provides children across Memphis with the opportunity to receive a free vision screening along with follow-up care with an eye professional for the children who need it. After studying tax materials throughout the fall and becoming IRS certified, I was able to participate in SaveFirst, which is a free tax preparation service offered to taxpayers in the greater Memphis area. There are four tax sites across the city; I serve at a community center in North Memphis. SaveFirst has been my favorite experience so far because I have been able to meet a very practical need in the community while at the same time build friendships and be challenged by peoples' stories. The last initiative, Stories from the Line, will create a documentary comprised of interviews conducted by Impact America AmeriCorps members with people who have been impacted by our initiatives. Our hope is to pull all of our work together in the form of powerful narratives in order to raise awareness for poverty and spark dialogue during an election year.